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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 108136

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/24/2033
TAGS: ETTC PARM PREL MASS RS IR

SUBJECT: (S) POSSIBLE NEW RUSSIAN AGREEMENT TO TRANSFER S-300 TO IRAN

REF: (A) MOSCOW 1586, (B) MOSCOW 1254, (C) STATE 046956, (D) STATE 073757, (E) MOSCOW 2635, (F) STATE 137954 (07), (G) MOSCOW 4897 (07), (H) STATE 33076 (07)

CLASSIFIED BY EUR/FO DAS MERKEL, REASONS 1.4 (B), (C), AND (D).

¶1. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. PLEASE SEE PARAGRAPH ¶1.

BACKGROUND

¶2. (S/NF) RECENT INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION INDICATES THAT IRANIAN AND RUSSIAN MILITARY OFFICIALS HAVE COME TO AN INITIAL AGREEMENT ON THE PROVISION OF ADVANCED AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS TO IRAN. THESE SYSTEMS COULD BE PROVIDED WITHIN "SEVERAL WEEKS." THE SYSTEMS DISCUSSED FOR TRANSFER LIKELY ARE A DIFFERENT CLASS OF S-300 MISSILES THAN THOSE COVERED BY THE CONTRACT THE GOR INFORMED THE USG ABOUT IN DECEMBER 2006. AT THAT TIME, PRESIDENT PUTIN INFORMED PRESIDENT BUSH THAT RUSSIA HAD SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH IRAN FOUR YEARS AGO FOR THE S-300/SA-20, BUT THE CONTRACT WAS NOT BEING IMPLEMENTED. PUTIN FURTHER SAID THAT IF THINGS WENT WELL IN TERMS OF BOTH RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND MANAGING ITS NUCLEAR ASPIRATIONS, RUSSIA WOULD PROCEED AND BE WITHIN ITS FULL RIGHTS TO DO SO. IN DECEMBER 2007, THE MFA REPEATED PUTIN'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT BUSH. THE ISSUE WAS AGAIN RAISED BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS AT SOCHI IN APRIL 2008; PUTIN AGAIN REPEATED HIS RESPONSE FROM DECEMBER 2006 THAT THE CONTRACT WAS NOT BEING IMPLEMENTED.

¶3. (S) THE S-300 FAMILY OF SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEMS IS A HIGHLY ADVANCED SYSTEM. AN IRANIAN PURCHASE OF ANY VARIANT OF THE SYSTEM WOULD PROVIDE IRAN WITH A MISSILE SYSTEM WITH A RANGE BETWEEN 75 - 200 KILOMETERS. IT WOULD SEVERLY IMPACT THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE REGION AND SEND THE WRONG MESSAGE OF URGING IRAN TO COMPLY WITH SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS.

¶4. (S) (S) ON JULY 17, WE PROVIDED RUSSIA WITH INFORMATION INDICATING THERE WAS A GROWING BODY OF INFORMATION INDICATING THAT IRAN WAS SEEKING THE Igla-S MANPAD SYSTEM FROM RUSSIA (REF D). ON SEPTEMBER 3, RUSSIA REFUTED ALLEGATIONS THAT IRAN ATTEMPTED TO PURCHASE MANPADS FROM RUSSIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND REITERATED THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENT'S BAN ON SALES OF MANPADS TO IRAN (REF E). THE RUSSIAN RESPONSE WELCOMED THE U.S. INFORMATION AND STATED A "READINESS TO COOPERATE" ON THIS ISSUE AND OTHER "ATTEMPTS BY FOREIGN ORGANIZATIONS TO VIOLATE RUSSIA'S EXPORT CONTROL SYSTEM." ALSO ON SEPTEMBER 3RD, AND POSSIBLY RELATED TO THIS RESPONSE, FM LAVROV SAID THAT RUSSIA DOES NOT COVERTLY SUPPLY RUSSIAN ARMS TO IRAN OR ANY OTHER REGION.

¶5. (S) IN OCTOBER 2007, THE U.S. PROVIDED FORMER DFM KISLYAK WITH A NONPAPER ON CONCERN WITH RUSSIAN ARMS SALES TO IRAN AND SYRIA, NOTING IN PARTICULAR CONCERN THAT BOTH RECIPIENT COUNTRIES DIVERT WEAPONS TO TERRORIST AND INSURGENT GROUPS, INCLUDING GROUPS FIGHTING U.S. AND COALITION FORCES IN IRAQ. WE RAISED SPECIFIC CONCERN ABOUT RUSSIAN SALES OF EQUIPMENT TO

SYRIA, SUCH AS ADVANCED AIR-TO-SURFACE WEAPONRY; MODERN SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEMS; ELECTRONIC WARFARE-ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT; AMMUNITION PRODUCTION FACILITIES; PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT FOR MACHINE GUNS; AND THE SALE OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT AND OVERHAULS/UPGRADES OF EXISTING AIR FORCE INVENTORY. KISLYAK QUERIED HOW THE U.S. COULD DETERMINE WEAPONS FOUND IN IRAQ CAME FROM RUSSIA AND NOT FROM ANOTHER FSU COUNTRY. IN JANUARY 2007 AND JULY 2008, DURING BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS THE GOR DISCUSSED THEIR LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE AND CONDUCT END-USE CONTROLS. RUSSIA NOW HAS THE AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT INSPECTIONS OF EQUIPMENT IT HAS PROVIDED OTHER COUNTRIES, BUT WILL ONLY DO SO IF INFORMATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED INDICATING A VIOLATION OF THE RECIPIENTS END-USE COMMITMENTS. RUSSIA WILL NOT MAKE ANNUAL INSPECTIONS A REQUIREMENT IN EXPORT LICENSES. (REFS F-H)

OBJECTIVES

16. (S) WASHINGTON WOULD LIKE TO INFORM RUSSIA OF OUR STRONG OBJECTIONS TO THE TRANSFER OF ANY VARIANT OF THE S-300 OR IGLA-S TO IRAN AND ARMS TRANSFERS TO SYRIA.

ACTION REQUEST

17. (S) AMBASSADOR IS REQUESTED TO APPROACH APPROPRIATE SENIOR-LEVEL HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO RAISE USG OBJECTIONS TO THE POTENTIAL TRANSFER OF THE S-300 AND IGLA-S TO IRAN AND EXPRESS CONCERNS ABOUT ARMS SALES TO SYRIA. EMBASSY MAY DRAW UPON THE FOLLOWING POINTS, NOTING THE SECOND, EIGHTH, AND NINTH POINTS ARE DERIVED FROM INTELLIGENCE AND MUST BE USED VERBATIM:

BEGIN TALKING POINTS

SECRET/REL RUSSIA

--WE HAVE APPRECIATED OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR RUSSIAN OFFICIALS ON THE ISSUE OF THE SALE OF ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS TO IRAN. YOU HAVE RESPONDED THAT ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE A CONTRACT FOR THE S-300/SA-20, A TRANSFER WOULD BE DEPENDANT UPON IRAN'S BEHAVIOR, AND WE VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR HAVING KEPT THAT IMPORTANT COMMITMENT.

--HOWEVER, WE HAVE INFORMATION THAT SENIOR IRANIAN AND RUSSIAN MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES CAME TO AN INITIAL AGREEMENT ON THE PROVISION OF ADvanced AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS TO IRAN IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 2008. OUR INFORMATION SHOWS THAT THE RUSSIAN MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES INDICATED THEY WERE WILLING TO PROVIDE S-300 AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS TO IRAN WITHIN "SEVERAL WEEKS."

--WHILE OUR PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS, AND YOUR COMMITMENTS TO US, HAVE PRIMARILY BEEN RELATED TO YOUR CONTRACT WITH IRAN FOR THE SA-20 VARIANT OF THE S-300 SYSTEM, GIVEN YOUR SUPPORT FOR UNSCRS 1747 AND 1803, WHICH CALL FOR "VIGILANCE AND RESTRAINT" IN ARMS SALES TO IRAN, WE WOULD STRONGLY OBJECT TO THE SALE OF ANY VARIANT OF THE S-300 AND WOULD LIKE TO KNOW YOUR INTENTIONS.

--ANY VARIANT OF THE S-300, A FAMILY OF HIGH PERFORMANCE SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEMS, EVEN ONE LESS CAPABLE THAN THE SA-20, WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY UPGRADE IRAN'S AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY.

--THE U.S. IS CONCERNED THAT THE S-300 WOULD GREATLY INCREASE THE RISKS TO U.S. AND COALITION MILITARY ASSETS IN THE REGION AS WELL AS PROVOKE REGIONAL INSTABILITY.

--ON A SEPARATE, BUT RELATED ISSUE, WE WOULD LIKE TO FOLLOW-UP WITH YOU ON OUR INFORMATION INDICATING THAT IRAN WAS SEEKING THE IGLA-S MANPADS FROM RUSSIA.

--WE WELCOMED YOUR SEPTEMBER 3RD RESPONSE INDICATING THAT YOUR INVESTIGATION DID NOT REVEAL ANY EFFORTS BY

IRAN TO ACQUIRE THE IGLA-S MANPADS AND YOUR INTEREST IN FURTHER COOPERATION ON THIS MATTER. YOU ALSO INFORMED US THAT "BY THE DECISION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THERE EXISTS A BAN ON SUPPLYING MANPADS TO IRAN. THIS BAN IS STRICTLY OBSERVED."

-- WE NOW HAVE INFORMATION THAT RUSSIA INTENDS TO EXPEDITE DELIVERY OF AND TRAINING FOR IGLA-S AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS TO IRAN.

--WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE IGLA-S, ESPECIALLY IF DELIVERED IN A MANPADS CONFIGURATION, COULD BE PROLIFERATED EASILY OUTSIDE IRAN. IRAN IN THE PAST FEW YEARS HAS SUPPLIED MANPADS TO TERRORIST AND INSURGENT GROUPS, AND THE PROVISION OF THE IGLA-S, RUSSIA'S MOST ADVANCED MANPADS, INCREASES THE RISK TO BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT.

--IT IS WELL-KNOWN THAT THE IRANIAN REGIME IS A STATE SUPPORTER OF TERRORISM, AND HAS AN ESTABLISHED TRACK RECORD OF PROVIDING LETHAL SUPPORT TO SHI'A EXTREMISTS IN IRAQ THAT HAVE ATTACKED U.S. AND IRAQI SOLDIERS; TALIBAN FIGHTERS IN AFGHANISTAN; HIZBALLAH; AND PALESTINIAN TERRORIST GROUPS IN SYRIA, LEBANON, AND THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES. THE IGLA-S, IF TRANSFERRED, COULD THUS POSE A DIRECT THREAT TO U.S. AND COALITION FORCES IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN AND PROMOTE FURTHER REGIONAL INSTABILITY.

--WITH IRAN IN NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ITS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND AT A TIME THAT OUR COUNTRIES ARE ATTEMPTING TO PRESS IRAN TO COOPERATE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN PART THROUGH INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS, WE BELIEVE THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR ANYONE TO BE ENGAGING IRAN ON ADVANCED WEAPONS SALES.

--WE THUS URGE YOU NOT TO TRANSFER ANY VARIANT OF THE S-300 SYSTEM TO IRAN AND TO PREVENT ANY TRANSFER OF THE IGLA-S AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM.

--WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT RUSSIAN SALES OF EQUIPMENT TO SYRIA, SUCH AS ADVANCED AIR-TO-SURFACE WEAPONRY; MODERN SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEMS; ELECTRONIC WARFARE-ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT; AMMUNITION PRODUCTION FACILITIES; PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT FOR MACHINE GUNS; AND THE SALE OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT AND OVERHAULS/UPGRADES OF EXISTING AIR FORCE INVENTORY.

--MOST RECENTLY IN MAY 2008, WE PROVIDED YOU WITH INFORMATION THAT SYRIA IS TO RECEIVE A SHIPMENT OF IGLA-S AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT IN LATE MAY FROM A RUSSIAN FACILITY. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT SHIPMENT MAY CONTAIN MAN-PORTABLE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS (MANPADS).

--IN RESPONSE YOU INDICATED THAT RUSSIA DOES NOT SELL MANPADS (VERSUS VEHICLE-MOUNTED SYSTEMS) TO SYRIA, BUT WOULD UNDERTAKE TO CLARIFY WHETHER A SALE WAS PENDING. WE WOULD WELCOME AN UPDATE ON YOUR INVESTIGATION INTO THIS MATTER.

--AS WE HAVE DISCUSSED ON MULTIPLE OCCASIONS, WE BELIEVE SYRIA DIVERTS SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF WEAPONS, INCLUDING RUSSIAN-MANUFACTURED SYSTEMS, TO HIZBULLAH, VIOLATING UNSCR 1701'S PROHIBITION ON ANY ARMS TRANSFERS TO LEBANON NOT SANCTIONED BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. SUCH DIVERSIONS ALSO THREATEN REGIONAL SECURITY. WE URGE THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT TO USE STRONG MEASURES - SUCH AS VERIFIABLE END-USER COMMITMENTS, REQUIRED INSPECTIONS, LIMITS ON DELIVERIES - TO CURB THIS SUSPECTED TRAFFIC.

END TALKING POINTS

¶8. (U) PLEASE CONTACT ISN/CATR'S MARGARET MITCHELL WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR FOLLOW-UP ISSUES RELATED TO THIS CASE (202-647-2433; MITCHELLMT2@STATE.SGOV.GOV) AND SLUG ANY

REPORTING ON THIS ISSUE FOR ISN/CATR AND EUR/PRA.
RICE

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End Cable Text